

Grace church on December 15 last, a sermon on, "Shall We Slur Sunday?", which is in striking contrast with the utterances of a few of his clerical brethren, and to which it is an unanswerable reply. The closing passage is as follows:

There is not an educated man or woman who will deny that the institution known as Sunday has had an immense, a quite incalculable part in shaping the social and public life of our whole country. Emerson, a prophet not overfriendly to the Christian religion, as commonly understood, called Sunday "the backbone of our civilization." I feel, therefore, that I run no risk of being charged with overstatement when I say that any attempt to loosen the restrictions which now serve to fence off Sunday from other days is virtually an attempt to alter our type of civilization. That type of civilization was practically fixed by the middle of the century which has lately closed. The greater part of the immigration, at whose behest we are now told we must change things, has come in since then. If, under the law of universal suffrage and the prevalence of the will of the major number of voters, our type of civilization under which, be it remembered, all our greater triumphs as a people have been achieved—if, I say, it is inevitable that under existing political conditions the type must change, so be it; but let us not by "contributory negligence," as the lawyers call it, make ourselves responsible for the loss of something which once gone will be hard to recover.

There is a cry for "home rule for cities." That is all well enough, but in at least one city that we know of there has been so much home misrule that we may well hesitate before cutting our local machinery wholly loose from the great balance wheel of that larger public opinion which it may be convenient to stigmatize as bucolic, but which has more than once, and more than twice, saved the State—saved, that is to say, that social unit to which sovereignty is attached—from deep disaster.

Upon the argument that laws acknowledged to be righteous and wholesome must be abandoned the moment it comes to be generally believed that they cannot be enforced, I should be mortified to dwell. That sort of reasoning "eateth," to use Paul's strong simile, "like a gangrene" into the very vitals of the body politic. Who knows beforehand how much or how little of law can be enforced until an effort at enforcement, an impartial effort—an effort, that is to say, which knows of no distinction between rich and poor—has been made? That is where the sting lies.

A few weeks ago it was the policy shops that could not be suppressed; just now it is the Sunday saloon. But certainly for a reform administration, chosen on the direct issue of the nonexecution of the laws, to start upon its career with a tacit understanding that certain laws are not to be enforced, will be a most unhappy augury. Let us at least find out by honest experiment just which those laws are that cannot be executed before we pusillanimously wipe them from the statute book, lest peradventure in passing our sponge over certain ordinances of man we blot out somewhat of the handwriting of Almighty God. I have used the word "effort." Of course there must be effort. It is a mistake to suppose that communities, any more than individuals, grow strong by having things that are hard or of the nature of restraint taken out of the path. The line of least resistance may be the way of life in physics, but as often it is the way of death in psychics.

I have spoken strongly, friends, but this is a great city; its example is mightily potent for good or for evil the country over, and the minister of religion who under the specious cover of a disinclination to trench upon politics fails to let his people know what he really thinks about the grave moral questions which from time to time force themselves to the front, is unworthy of his calling. Let him speak out—for or against.

I recall a crisis similar to this one, only some five or six years ago. A public official, understanding, and rightly, that he had been sworn to enforce the law as it stood, enforced it. There was at once a popular outcry on the part of people with whom the gratification of their appetites on seven days of the week meant far more than any idealistic talk about preserving our type of civilization. "Poor man," they cried; "so honest, so resolute, but his political prospects are dashed forever; it is all up with him." Today that resolute and honest man is the first citizen of the republic. What a lesson to temporizers and opportunists!

### The Truth In the Right Place

Elder John E. Mohler of Warrensburg, Mo., a minister of more than ordinary ability, and a member of the German Baptist church, contributes an article to a recent number of

the Gospel Messenger, the official organ of that church, on, "Being Worldly." The article is a timely one, and will be welcomed by our own people as an evidence of the near approach of a more fraternal feeling and changed attitude among the more intelligent members of our sister denomination toward the Brethren. Were we disposed to do so, it would be quite an easy matter to give instances which have come under our own observation that would more than duplicate those given by Brother Mohler, and that too by men who have given their voice for the expulsion from the church of noble, self sacrificing women, guilty of no crime save a disregard for the "traditions of the elders." We reproduce here the article in full, believing that it will be read with interest and profit by the readers of the EVANGELIST. We are grateful to Brother Mohler for his thoughtful article, and to the management of the Gospel Messenger for so generously placing it before their readers:

It is a hard thing to keep from being worldly, and I have never met the man or woman who wholly succeeded. And still the church is full of people who point out others both in and out of the church as being worldly. Jesus knew this would be the case when he warned those who had great faults to get rid of them before noticing the little faults of others. Perhaps most of us hear him in this, but we surely are prone to see the great faults in others while we harbor smaller ones in ourselves, in the way of being worldly.

I knew a brother to severely denounce his daughter for uniting with a worldly church, and he himself was known widely as a trickster in horse trading. And yet he denounced worldlyism! Another was a deacon brother who resembled in appearance an artist's idea of one of the patriarchs, and he kept the letter of church regulations faultlessly, and swooped down upon those who were so worldly as to fail in a single point. And yet he added treasure to treasure upon the earth, and farm to farm, and apparently few treasures in heaven. In another case a church congregation, without a dissenting voice, expelled a member for refusing to hear the counsel of the church and yet this congregation, year after year, in the face of gospel teaching, refused to hear the command of the Savior himself to aid in carrying the Gospel to others. Why? Its members were absorbed in the cares of the world.

And the cases might be multiplied indefinitely right in the midst of our Fraternity, which boasts of being a people separate from the world. And this very boasting is of a worldly spirit. Is it any wonder we do not keep the world out of the church, when we are all so easily deceived? And how often when we are wielding the Sword of the Spirit do we discharge the gun of Satan! Even our very anxiety to rid the church of the world is taken advantage of by Satan, and we are so ignorant of his ways. Why, he would rather that we should force wrongs out of the church than not, because then he has us all in the mesh. Did you ever think of that? It is because forced obedience belongs to him alone, for God controls by drawing us. John 6:44. And how often have members, deacons, ministers, elders, and whole assemblies of them all been drawn in by Satan when they thought they were expelling him!

The fact is the more men and women think and plan and work and worry and resolve to get Satan, in his worldly ways, out of the church, the more will he ensnare them.